

Mandative Constructions in American English of 1800

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In the recent years, mandative constructions have drawn attention and many studies have appeared^①. Many of them focus on the usage of mandative subjunctive and often compare the American and British usage. They use vast data of various corpora available and tend to concentrate on the twentieth century. My studies in the past, however, approach the subject of mandative constructions a little differently. Not only mandative subjunctive constructions, but also *should*, periphrastic, infinitive and gerund constructions have been discussed in their occurrence in American English. The materials used to survey these constructions are the books listed on bestselling list^② and they are bestselling books in 1900, 1948 and 1998. Since a bestselling list was not available for the years before 1900, the books published in 1850 were used for the survey of the construction of the year. As in the previous studies, all the books were read by the present writer and all the instances of mandative constructions were checked and collected. The findings of all these surveys of mine seem to support in the main what studies by corpora conclude, but it is also true that there are some slight differences as to the survey results.

My previous studies show that the types of mandative constructions used to show the mandative force change roughly before and after the year

1900. After 1900, the mandative subjunctive has come to be employed more and more frequently until it comes to be considered a feature of American English. As you go further back from 1900, a different construction, namely *should*-construction, becomes more prevalent. In the following, books published around 1800 are chosen and surveyed to see how this tendency is still observed. As in the previous study of American English in 1850, a bestselling list was not available for this year. Therefore, the materials analyzed for the study here are random and, since there were not many books published in 1800 and they were not easily available, the time span for the publication of the books for the present analysis was extended a little wider for more books. The earliest one is Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette; or, The History of Eliza Wharton; A Novel; Founded on Fact* (1797) and the latest one is Noah Webster, Esq.'s *The American Spelling Books; Containing the Rudiments of the English Language for the Schools in the United States* (1824), though the latter is the revised one and the original is said to have appeared in 1800. The books originally selected for the survey and read are 15 American works. Four of them, however, were found to have no or very few mandative constructions, thus they were excluded from the consideration of the mandative construction.^③

The mandative constructions the survey found for this study contain many words that also appeared in the previous studies. They are verbs, adjectives and nouns:

advise, agree, ask, beg, beseech, command, counsel,

decide, declare, decree, demand, direct, desire,

determine, entreat (intreat), forbid, insist, order,

propose, pray, recommend, require, say, state,

stipulate, suggest, tell, urge, wish, warn

better, essential, fit, fitting, important, natural,

necessary, proper, right, resolved

advice, agreement, condition, decree, desire, order,

opinion, request, resolution, wish

In addition to these words that trigger mandative constructions, there are found the following new words:

charge, implore, insinuate, intimate, intimidate,

intend, inform, move, report, take care

expedient, fair, of infinite moment, improper,

a proviso, requisite

intention, justice, notice, rule

There was also an obscure word, 'prepound' in "They prepounded that I was to be examined, touching a certain act of adultery I had committed." (Royall Tyler, *Algerine Captive*, p. 17) and it is not clear whether it is a typographical error and should be read as 'propound' or not. Although it is obscure, it has a mandative construction and was considered as such here.

With these trigger words, the following eight types of mandative constructions are surveyed and analyzed as done in the previous studies:

- 1 A *that* + *should*
B Φ + *should*
- 2 A *that* + subjunctive
B Φ + subjunctive
- 3 A *that* + periphrastic
B Φ + periphrastic
- 4 infinitive
- 5 gerund

N.B. Φ stands for the absence of the connective *that*.

There are, of course, constructions that do not fall under any of these eight mandative construction types. For example, Mason Locke Weems' *The Life of Washington* has "Resolved - that we view with abhorrence, and reject with disdain, ..." (p. 98) and "... it is requisite, not only that you speedily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, ..." (p. 120). In these cases, the verb form in the noun clause can be either in the present indicative or the present subjunctive, since both forms are the same. Thus, it cannot be determined whether it is to be considered in the indicative or subjunctive mood here. These are an ambiguous type of mandative construction and are excluded from the analysis here. Furthermore, Thomas Jefferson's *A Manual of Parliamentary Practice Composed for the Use of the Senate of the United States* has a different type of ambiguous construction: "... a member moves that the Committee may rise, and the chairman report the paper to the House..." (p. 56) In the second part, "the chairman report the paper to the House", the verb *report* appears to be in the subjunctive mood since it does not show any concord to the third person singular subject *the chairman*, but the closer look shows that the auxiliary *may* is deleted here, since there

is exactly the same construction in the preceding part, "the Committee may rise". This should be considered a periphrastic construction type, since formally there is no overt signal to indicate it is so, this is treated as an ambiguous type, too.

Figure 1. Types of Mandative Constructions

construction types	number of instances	
	American	British
1A. <i>that</i> + <i>should</i>	8	0
B. ϕ + <i>should</i>	0	0
2A. <i>that</i> + subjunctive	98	11
B. ϕ + subjunctive	4	3
3A. <i>that</i> + periphrastic	77	18
B. ϕ + periphrastic	8	6
4. infinitive	393	40
5. gerund	36	9
total	624	87

As Figure 1 shows, there are 624 instances of mandative constructions in all the twelve American books surveyed this time and 87 instances in the two British books. Seven ambiguous instances are not included in these numbers. Thus, the 624 instances are to be discussed as to the American mandative constructions. The British instances will be referred to and contrasted as needed.

Of the eight types, the type 4, namely the infinitive construction, is the most commonly employed construction. This type has 393 instances and occupies 63 % of all the mandative constructions. This high percentage has been witnessed in the survey of 1998, 1948, 1900 and 1850 and shows the

same strong preference of American English for the infinitive construction. This inclination is also observed in the British English. Thus, it will be fair to say that the infinitive construction is the favorite construction of both American and British English. As has been suggested for its popularity in the previous studies of mine, the brevity and speediness match the colloquialness and smoothness of the speech and the narrative parts and are considered best to represent more natural speedy style.

The second most frequent mandative construction is the type 1A, a construction with a mandative trigger word followed by a noun phrase that contains the auxiliary *should* and the connective *that*, as in "In the execution of such a plan, nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that in place of them just and amiable feelings towards all should be cultivated." (Mason Locke Weems) This type has 98 instances and occupies 15.7% of all the mandative constructions. The same preference for this *should* construction is seen in the analysis results of American English of 1900 and 1850. The *should* construction with the connective *that* seems a very much established construction for the mandative before 1900. The British English of the books of the year 1800^④ seems also to favor this *should* construction. There are 11 instances of the *should* construction with the connective *that* out of the total 87 instances in the British books. It occupies 12.6% of all the mandative constructions and comes after the infinitive and 3A *that* + periphrastic constructions. On the other hand, 1B type, namely the mandative trigger word followed by a noun clause that has the auxiliary *should* and no connective *that*, is not very popular. There are only four instances and it occupies mere 0.6% of all the mandative constructions. Curious is Alexander Hamilton's usage. He has the total of fifteen mandative constructions, twelve of which are of this construction type. Of the remaining

three, two are of the infinitive construction and one is of 1B type, namely $\phi +$ *should*.

The third most common construction is 3A type, that is to say the mandative trigger word followed by the noun clause with the connective *that* and the auxiliary words other than *should*. The auxiliary words used for this construction are of various kinds as in the following:

"But finding that he was going very fast, he begged that they would send for him in all haste ..." (Mason Locke Weems)

"I contended, telling him, that he must not expect anything more than general subjects from me." (Hannah Webster Foster)

"The learned, scrupulous Physician, after requesting that the doors and windows might be shut, approached the quarter, ..." (Royall Tyler)

Besides the auxiliary words quoted above, *can*, *had better*, *may*, *ought to*, *shall*, *will* and *be to* are also used to express the different strength of the command, demand and others and the various nuances the speaker feels. For example, *would* in the instance quoted from Mason Locke Weems indicates that the speaker *he* respects the will of the subject of the noun clauses and thus it is not a strong demand but a polite one. On the other hand, *must* in the second instance above, indicates the strong will of the speaker *I* and what is demanded is expected to be carried out by any means, whether he wants to do it or not. This is a very strong command. Another auxiliary, *shall*, is interesting, too. Thomas Jefferson uses this very much in *A Manual of Parliamentary Practice Composed for the Use of the Senate of the United States*. This auxiliary shows that what is demanded must be put into action because it is predetermined by rule, agreement, and what not to be done. For example,

its connotation is seen clearly in "It is laid down as a general rule, that amendments proposed at the second reading shall be twice read, and those proposed at the third reading thrice read." (Thomas Jefferson. *A Manual*) The British counterpart favors this pattern, too. There are 18 instances of this periphrastic construction and it occupies 20.7 % of all the mandative constructions.

After the *that* + periphrastic construction comes the gerund. There are 36 instances and it occupies 5.8 %. The number of occurrence of this type cannot be said to be great, as has been shown in my previous studies of the mandative constructions of 1998, 1948, 1900, and 1850. This is perhaps due to the small number of the verbs that take the gerund construction. The verbs found in this survey are *forbid*, *insist on (upon)*, *propose*, and *urge* as in :

"She insisted upon my going with her into the arbor." (Hannah Webster Foster)

"Oh! Why do my unhappy stars forbid my going to the dear creature?" (Tabitha Gilman Tenney)

"Doctor Wood and another person then proposed going with me."
(Thomas Jefferson, *Appendix*)

"... and urged my accompanying them." (Hannah Webster Foster)

Some verbs like *insist* and *propose* are also construed with the noun clause, in addition to the gerund, but, while the latter type is more prevalent in 1850, 1900, 1948, and 1998, the gerund construction is favored (as the number of the instances of the gerund construction shows). This may be due to the brevity of the gerund construction compared to the long and heavy noun clause, just as the infinitive construction is favored for its brevity and colloquialness. The brevity, smoothness and colloquialness are better expressed in gerund than in the noun clause constructions.

The subjunctive construction is the least used construction pattern in all the mandative construction types surveyed here. There are only eight instances out of the total of 624 mandative constructions. It is mere 1.3 %. The British counterpart has no instance of this subjunctive construction pattern. The low occurrence of the subjunctive construction was also observed in the studies of 1900 and 1850, but it occurred more than the gerund construction in those years. However, the survey of the mandative constructions of 1800 shows that the subjunctive is the least employed construction pattern. So, the mandative subjunctive as a characteristic feature of American English is a rather recent phenomenon and it does not go further back than 1900.

A curious finding about the subjunctive construction is that all the instances are in the passive voice:

"Gentleman, it is proposed, that the thanks of the HOUSE be given to Major Washington, ..." (Mason Webster Weems)

"It is very material that order, decency, and regularity be preserved in a dignified public body." (Thomas Jefferson)

"But where an order is made that any particular matter be taken up on a particular day." (Ibid.)

"Resolved, by the Senate and the House of Representatives, that the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of the Representatives, be authorized to close the present session..." (Ibid.)

It is not clear why it is so. However, of eight instances, six are in Thomas Jefferson (*A Manual*) and one is in Mason Locke Weems and Timothy Dwight each and all three writers use them in the context related to laws or the Senate procedures. In the laws, sentences are often written with no

human subjects to be more mechanical and objective. These writers must have this in mind when they used the passive voice.

Now, when we look at the voices, there appears a curious result. The active voice is predominant with the 527 instances out of the total of 624 while the passive voice is marginal in the employment, with only 97 instances. Especially, the infinitive construction is very interesting. Of 393 instances, 360 are of the active voice and only 32 of the passive voice. More than 90 % of the infinitive constructions are of the active voice. Furthermore, of the passive constructions there are such passive constructions as "Miss Wharton ... desires me to be seated." (Hannah Webster Foster) The construction itself is of the *be* + the past participle of a verb and is considered to be of passive voice. However, *seated* is used like an adjective as *surprised* in "I'm surprised." or an intransitive verb with the meaning *sit*. To be seated appears six times in Weems, Tenney and Tyler, so if this usage is excluded, since it carries the force of an adjective or an intransitive verb, rather than the passive voice meaning, the number of the passive voice instances will go down to 27.

Figure 2. Active and Passive Voice

construction types	number of instances			
	Am. active	passive	Brit. active	passive
1A. <i>that</i> + <i>should</i>	73	1	8	3
B. <i>that</i> + <i>should</i>	3	1	3	0
2A. <i>that</i> + subjunctive	0	8	0	0
B. ϕ + subjunctive	0	0	0	0
3A. <i>that</i> + periphrastic	47	30	15	3
B. ϕ + periphrastic	6	2	6	0
4. infinitive	360	33	34	6
5. gerund	36	0	8	1

Curious is Thomas Jefferson, who in *A Manual* uses the passive voice 28 times out of the total of 42 instances. This may have to do with the writing style of the laws or rules, which tend to have a non-human subject.

Another thing to be noted is the balance of the affirmative and negative constructions. As Figure 3 shows, the affirmative constructions surpass the negatives in occurrence. The negatives are expressed variously. For example, adverbs such as *not*, *never* and *neither* are used as in "We ask you not to view those eyes." (Mason Locke Weems). The noun is also used as in "... he resolved ..., that nothing should be wanting on his part to fill up the measure of his story." (ibid.) and an adverbial is also used to show the negative content of the command as in "As well might he have insisted that the load stone should no longer attract the needle, as that the graces and virtues of O'Connor should cease to attract my fondest affections!" (Tabith Gilman Tenney). In addition to these negative particles, the trigger word *forbid* is sometimes employed to carry the force of the negative command as in "... forbidden them to repair their fortifications." (Royall Tyler)

Figure 3. Affirmative and Negative

construction type	Am. affirm. negat.		Brit. affirm. negat	
1 A <i>that</i> + <i>should</i>	15	13	10	1
B Φ + <i>should</i>	3	1	0	0
2 A <i>that</i> + subjunctive	8	0	0	0
B Φ + subjunctive	0	0	3	0
3 A <i>that</i> + periphrastic	63	14	14	4
B Φ + periphrastic	8	0	6	0
4 infinitive	361	32	35	5
5 gerund	36	0	9	0

As referred to in the previous studies^⑤, the low occurrence of the construction without the connective *that*, namely 1B, 2B and 3B types, is to be noted here, too. Out of 195 noun clauses, 183 has the *that* connective. This means that 93.8 % of the noun clauses are preceded by the *that* connective. In other words, the construction without the connective as in the following is very rare:

“... it was proper it should be made the vehicle of retribution.”

(Thomas Jefferson, *Appendix*)

“The King having sent original letters to the Commons, afterwards desires they may be returned, that he may communicate them to the Lords. (Ibid.)

“... whether he intended I should perish with famine ...” (Charles Brockden Brown)

“The gentleman, palavering up Miss Dorcasina, now told her she might write to her ...” (Tabitha Gilman Tenney)

Since the construction without the connective *that* appears both in narrative parts and direct speeches and both in formal writings as Jefferson's *Appendix* and ordinary writings as in others above, the presence or absence of the connective *that* does not seem to suggest that it is used to show the formality or colloquialness of the speech. The survey shows that the connective *that* is a very prevalent standard form or almost a norm to introduce a noun clause in this period. However, its absence does not necessarily mean that the construction is something to be looked down or substandard, as the Jefferson's instances show.

In conclusion, several things have come to light regarding the mandative constructions of American English around the year of 1800. Firstly, the

infinitive construction was the most commonly used mandative construction pattern. Throughout a series of my surveys of the mandative constructions of the years of 1998, 1948, 1900, 1850 and 1800, infinitives are used most predominantly in American English, as well as in British English. This is mainly because it is short, smooth and, thus, colloquial-sounding.

Secondly, the *that* + *should* construction was the second most favored construction type and the *that* + periphrastic the third. It seems that as you go back from the year of 1900, the subjunctive construction, which is often said to be one of the characteristic features of American English, comes to occur less and less, and the various auxiliary words including *should* come to be used in the noun clause that follows a mandative word. There was also found the fact that the connective *that* is almost always employed to introduce the noun clause. More than 90 % of the time, *that* is found to be present in mandative noun clause constructions. In the later years, the presence of the connective *that* becomes less frequent and its absence indicates the casualness of the speech. However, in the survey of the English of 1800, this was not the case. The presence and absence of the connective is not necessarily connected to the casualness or formality of the speech, the best example of which is the usage of Thomas Jefferson. His *Appendix* is the report of the investigation of the murder and is a very formal and official one. So, its absence is not a marker of a substandard speech way.

Another thing that is to be noted is the low occurrence of the passive voice and the negative, in other words the most common type of the mandative construction is the affirmative active construction. This is not limited just to the English of 1800. The passive voice and the negative construction are not favored in the mandative constructions in all the periods my surveys have covered so far. However, in the case of the usage surveyed here, the passive voice seems to be reserved for the description of the law

enforcement, as was seen in Thomas Jefferson and Timothy Dwight.

The series of the survey of the mandative constructions of American English from 1800 to 1998 has revealed that there is a turning point in the usage of the mandative subjunctive construction and that this turning point is somewhere around the year 1900. Before 1900, the mandative constructions of American English is basically not so different from that of British English and there is nothing so American in the mandative construction types they favor. However, after 1900, the occurrence of the mandative subjunctive increases so that it becomes one of the features of American English. It is not well known why the resurgence or revival of mandative subjunctive occurs in U.S.A. and not in Britain, after 1900. It may have to do with immigrants who arrived at U.S.A. en masse shortly before the turn of the century, but it is not clear. More research needs to be done on this.

Notes:

1. For example, see two articles Göran Kjellmer, "The revived subjunctive," (pp. 246-276) and William J. Crawford, "The mandative subjunctive" (pp. 257-276) in Günter Rohdenburg and Julia Schlüter (eds.), *One Language, Two Grammars?: Differences between British and American English*. CUP 2009.
2. [//www.caderbooks.com/best_00.html//](http://www.caderbooks.com/best_00.html//)
3. David Cook, *Cook's American Arithmetic: Being a System of Decimal Arithmetic, Comporting with the Federal Currency of the United States of America: To Which is Annexed, by Way of Second Part, the American Surveyor, the Whole On an Entire New Plan: To Which is Added*. Publisher unknown, 1800. Repr. Nabu Public Domain, 2010, Albert Gallatin, *Views of the Public Debt, Receipts, & Expenditures of the United States*. 2nd edition. Printed by Mathew Carey

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4. The following two Brifish (Irish) works are used: Regina Maria Roche, *The vicar of Lansdowne; or country quarters*, vols, I and II, Minerva Press 1800. Repr. Gale ECCO Editions and Maria Edeworth, *Castle Rockrent* 1800. ed. by A. Norman Jeppares, 2009.
 5. Masao Mima. "Mandative Constructions in American Bestsellers of 1900," *International Studies* (Faculty of International Human Studies, Kagoshima Immaculate Heart University) 16 (2010), 77-91, and "Mandative Constructions in American English of 1850," *International Studies* (Faculty of International Human Studies, Kagoshima Immaculate Heart University) 18 (2012), 103-118.

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1800年時のアメリカ英語における 義務の表現構文の研究

三 間 晶 生

1800年前後にアメリカで出版された小説、マニュアル、哲学書等を通して、そこに現れた義務の表現構文の分類、使用頻度等を調査し、1800年頃のアメリカ英語の義務の表現構文の傾向を調べた。特に顕著な結果として、名詞節には従来言われている義務の仮定法は殆ど見られず、むしろイギリス的とされてきたshouldを含む様々な法助動詞が使われていることが分かった。また、1998年からおよそ50年の間隔で時代をさかのぼり調査した結果、1900年頃を境に以降仮定法が「よみがえり」多用されるようになり、アメリカ英語の特徴と言われるようになるまでになったことが分かった。